



Afghan Community Response Survey

Fieldwork: 20th October - 3rd November 2021

Baseline survey results (Wave 1)



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Afghan Community Response Survey

This report presents results from the first monthly questionnaire sent to a cohort of Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations working directly with Afghan communities in London. The survey will ask organisations that work in London a number of questions to understand the needs of Afghan arrivals in our city.

This first survey includes questions on the profile of families, areas of need, level of demand and challenges being faced by organisations in their work. Surveys in future months will ask questions on how needs, demand and organisational capacity are changing over time. We aim to increase the size of the cohort and will continue to ask additional organisations to complete the survey.

The cohort was recruited using existing contacts held by the Greater London Authority, and ‘snowball’ sampling, i.e. organisations were asked to forward the invitation to participate to other VCSE organisations known to them. Organisations in the statutory sector were also asked to cascade the invitation to their local VCSE networks.

The questionnaire was open between 20th October and 3rd November 2021.

A total of 49 organisations responded to the survey, with 20 responding in full and 29 in part. Both full and partial responses have been included in the report. In the following sections, N indicates the number of responses received for each question. Due to the low sample size, figures have not been reported as percentages, though some rough fractions are used to aid ease of understanding in the text.

The information contained in these reports should be considered indicative only and may not be fully representative of all civil society organisations working with Afghan refugees in London. However, alongside other intelligence, we hope the information will be useful.

Results from the survey will be shared with responding organisations and with decision-makers supporting the pan-London emergency response.

Following further quality assurance, slides 11 and 12 have been updated with new data on 03/12/2021.

GEOGRAPHY

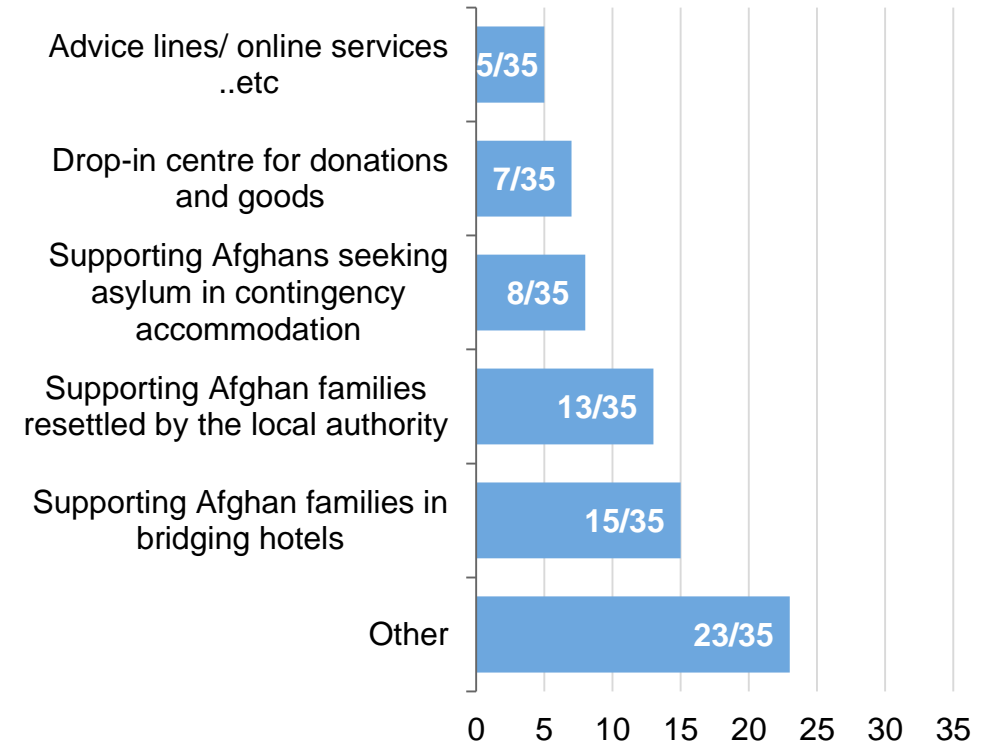
- All London boroughs are represented in the cohort. 48 responding organisations work across more than one borough with 10 working across the whole of London. One organisation did not state which boroughs it worked in.
- Fourteen organisations responding to the survey work across outer London boroughs only and 15 work across inner London boroughs only, with 19 working across both inner and outer London boroughs.

Borough	Number	Borough	Number
Barking and Dagenham	10	Hounslow	20
Barnet	13	Islington	13
Bexley	10	Kensington and Chelsea	16
Brent	16	Kingston upon Thames	13
Bromley	10	Lambeth	13
Camden	13	Lewisham	12
City of London	11	Merton	14
Croydon	15	Newham	12
Ealing	16	Redbridge	11
Enfield	11	Richmond upon Thames	16
Greenwich	12	Southwark	12
Hackney	12	Sutton	11
Hammersmith and Fulham	16	Tower Hamlets	14
Haringey	11	Waltham Forest	12
Harrow	12	Wandsworth	15
Havering	10	Westminster	14
Hillingdon	14	London wide	10

SUPPORTING AFGHAN ARRIVALS (1)

- When asked where their organisation supports Afghan arrivals, about half of organisations (18 out of 35) selected more than one of the options presented to them.
- Four in ten organisations (15 out of 35 organisations) were supporting Afghan families in bridging hotels, while 13 out of 35 organisations were supporting Afghan families being resettled by the local authority.
- Organisations were less likely to report providing support via advice lines/online (one in seven or 5 of 35 organisations).
- Of the 15 organisations that support Afghan families in bridging hotels, 3 support families in this area only, while 12 organisations provide support across more than one of the options presented to them in the question.

Where is your organisation supporting Afghan arrivals? Select all that apply - N=35



Base: all responding organisations (N=35)

SUPPORTING AFGHAN ARRIVALS (2)

- Around two thirds (23 out of 35 organisations) of organisations provided other types of support to the options presented in the question, including educational support such as access to ESOL classes, IT and education for children.
- Organisations also referred to supporting Afghan families with accommodation by helping the Council to source private landlords, accommodation and by supporting those facing homelessness.
- Support was also being provided to Afghan individuals/families who had been in the UK for a long period of time and in one case those still residing in Afghanistan.
- Across the 15 organisations that support Afghan families in bridging hotels, 5 also provide other types of support including supporting individuals still in Afghanistan, newly arrived family members of those already in the UK, support with education as well as donations.

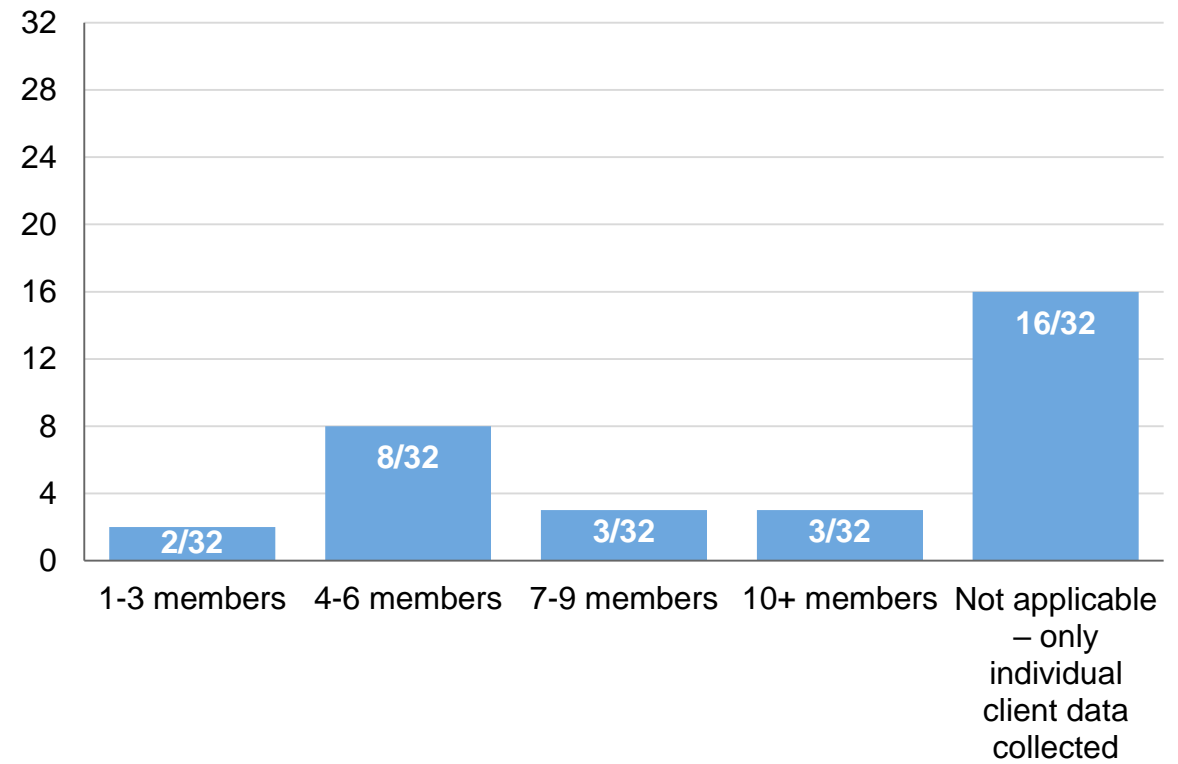
“Education (ESOL) for adults and education support for their children and young people (incl. homework clubs, learning mentors and casework) “

“We provide hosting and are being contacted by Afghan families in hotels who don't know how to access support and move on accommodation”

BENEFICIARIES/SERVICE USERS (1)

- Only half (16 out of 32 organisations) of the organisations surveyed were able to respond to the question about the average size of the Afghan families they are supporting.
- The other half reported only collecting individual client data (16 out of 32 organisations).
- Of the organisations that were able to answer about family size, 8 were supporting families with 4-6 members. Three organisations were supporting families with 7-9 members and 3 were supporting families with 10+ members.
- Organisations were less likely to support smaller families with 1-3 members (2 out of 32 organisations).
- Across the organisations that collected data on average family size, 11 supported Afghans in bridging hotels. Of these organisations, 5 out of 11 supported families with 4-6 members, followed by 3 supporting families with 7-9 members and 3 supporting families with 10+ members. No organisation supported families with 1-3 members.

The average size of the Afghan families organisations are supporting - N=32

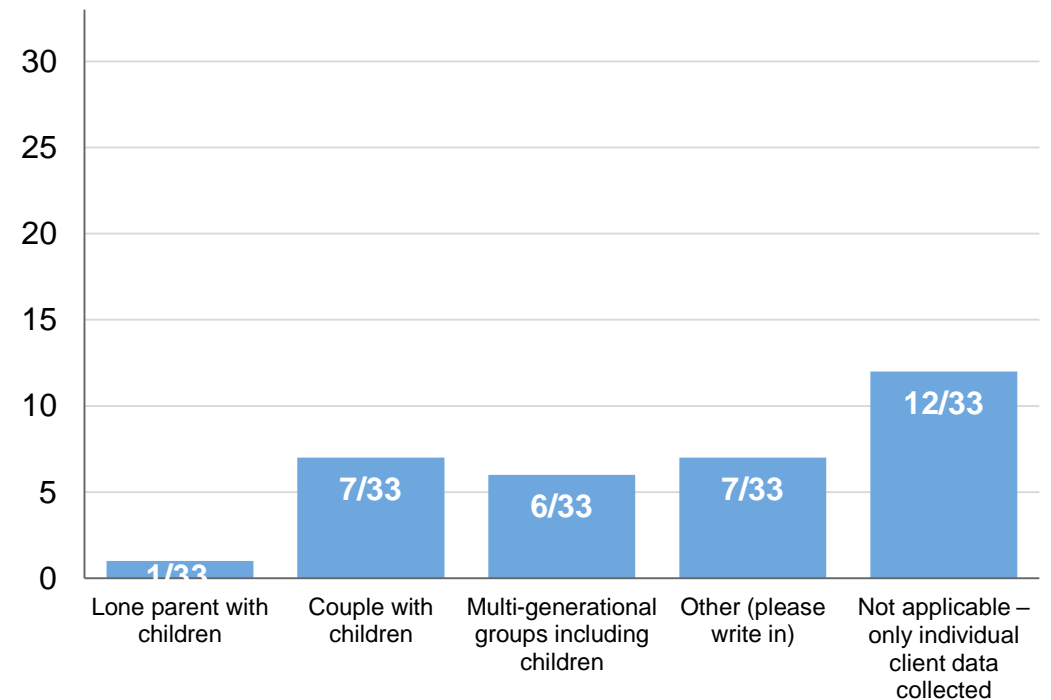


Base: all responding organisations (N=32)

BENEFICIARIES/SERVICE USERS (2)

- Again, there was a sizeable minority (12 out of 33 organisations or about 4 in 10) of organisations surveyed who were unable to answer about the make-up of the families they are supporting, due to only collecting individual client data.
- Of the organisations that do collect data on family make-up (21 organisations), one third (7 out of 21 organisations) supported families made up of a couple with children and just under one third (6 out of 21 organisations) supported multi-generational groups including children.
- Organisations were less likely to support families that were made up of a lone parent and children, with only 1 organisation supporting this family type.
- One third (7 out of 21 organisations) of organisations selected “Other”, with organisations stating that they are supporting extended families, including those in Afghanistan or families of a range of make ups.

What would you say is the make-up of the Afghan families that you are supporting? – N=33

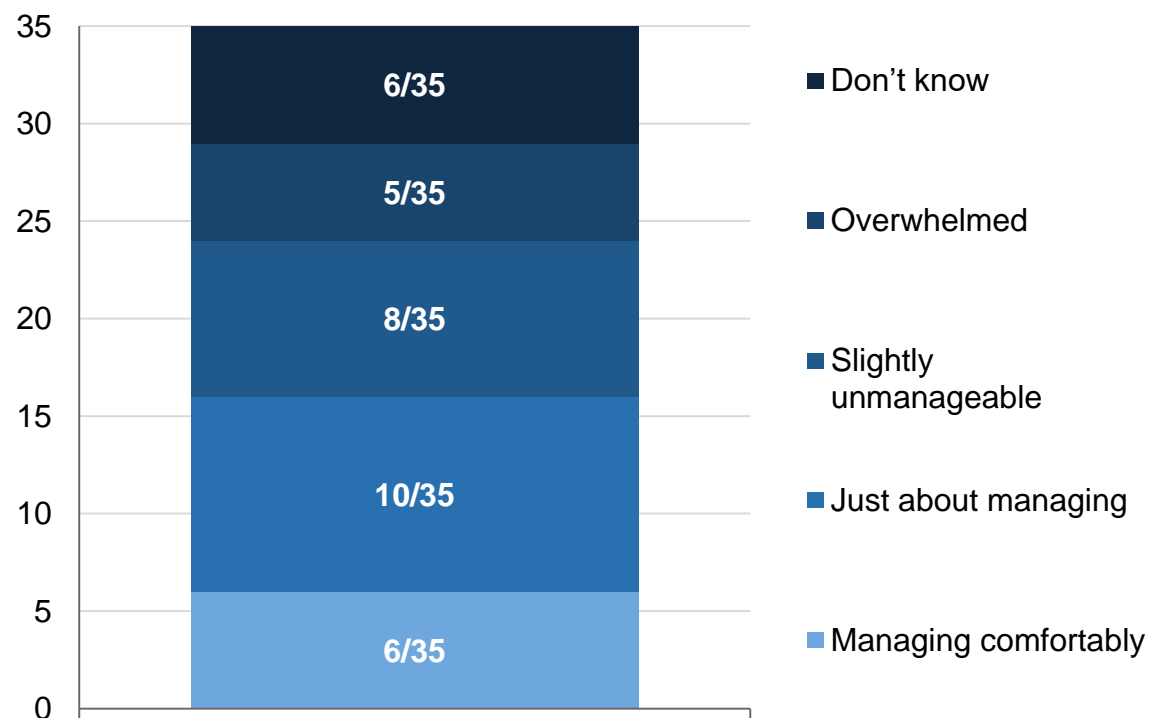


Base: all responding organisations (N=33)

DEMAND FOR SUPPORT

- Just under half the organisations were managing to cope with demand (16 out of 35). Of these, 10 were just about managing and 6 were coping comfortably.
- Of the other half who were not coping (13 organisations), 8 organisations stated that the demand they are receiving is slightly unmanageable, with 5 organisations stating that they are overwhelmed with demand. Six organisations did not know.
- Just under half (15 out of 35) of organisations responding to this question said they support Afghans in bridging hotels. Of these, 5 state that the demand they are receiving is slightly unmanageable; 4 state that they are overwhelmed; and 3 state that they are just about managing. Only 2 organisations are managing comfortably and one organisation did not know.

Currently, are you, or are you not, managing to cope with the demand for support from Afghan arrivals? N=35

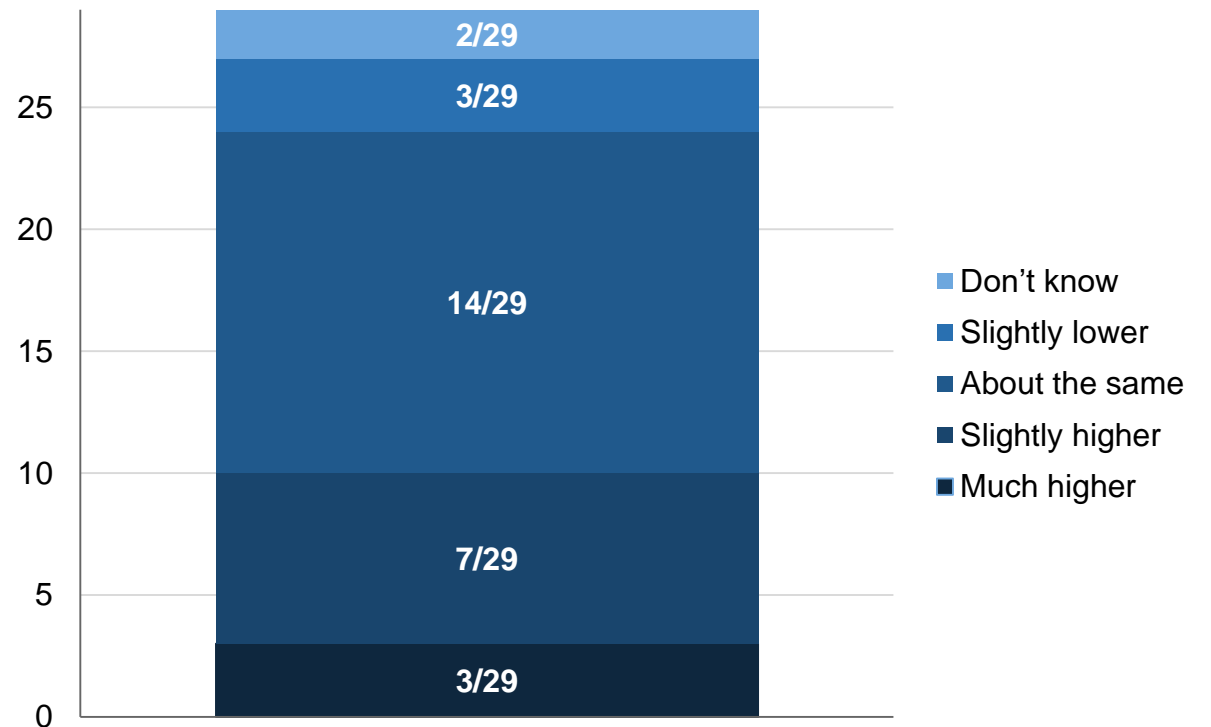


Base: all responding organisations (N=35)

DEMAND FOR SUPPORT IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS

- Over the last two weeks, around half (14 out of 29 organisations) of organisations said that they have seen about the same level of demand for support from Afghan arrivals.
- Around a third reported higher demand (7 out of 29 reporting slightly higher and 3 out of 29 reporting much higher demand).
- No organisation reported experiencing much lower demand for support over the last two weeks, but 3 organisations did report experiencing slightly lower demand.
- Of the organisations responding to this question, just under half (14 out of 29 organisations) support Afghans in bridging hotels. Half of these organisations (7 organisations) have experienced about the same level of demand over the last two weeks, with 5 organisations experiencing slightly or much higher demand for support.
- No organisations supporting Afghans in bridging hotels experienced much lower demand for support over the last two weeks, but 2 organisations experienced slightly lower demand.

Is the level of demand for support you are seeing from Afghan arrivals higher or lower in the last 2 weeks? N=29

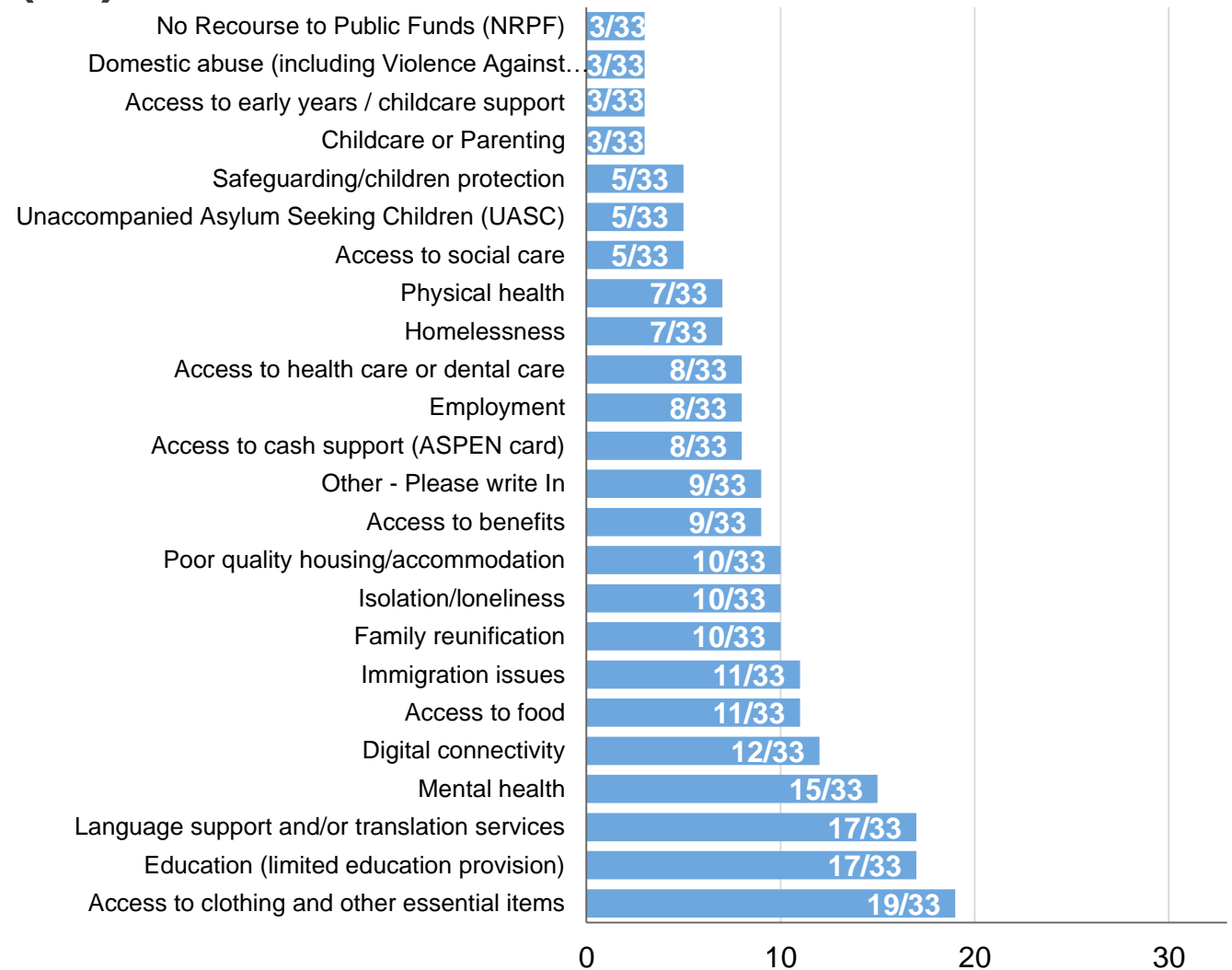


Base: all responding organisations (N=29)

SUPPORT NEED (1)

- Over three quarters of the organisations surveyed (26 out of 33 organisations) selected multiple areas of need for Afghan communities over the last two weeks. On average, organisations selected seven areas of need.
- Over half the organisations were more likely to have noted that Afghan families were in need of access to clothing and other essential items (19 out of 33 organisations); language support and/or translation services (17 out of 33 organisations) and education due to limited education provision (17 out of 33 organisations).
- Over a quarter (9 out of 33 organisations) of organisations listed other areas of need, not initially presented, in particular, noting accommodation as an area of need, referring to sourcing private landlords and accessing household furniture*.

What are the areas of need in Afghan communities in the last two weeks? Select all that apply - N=33



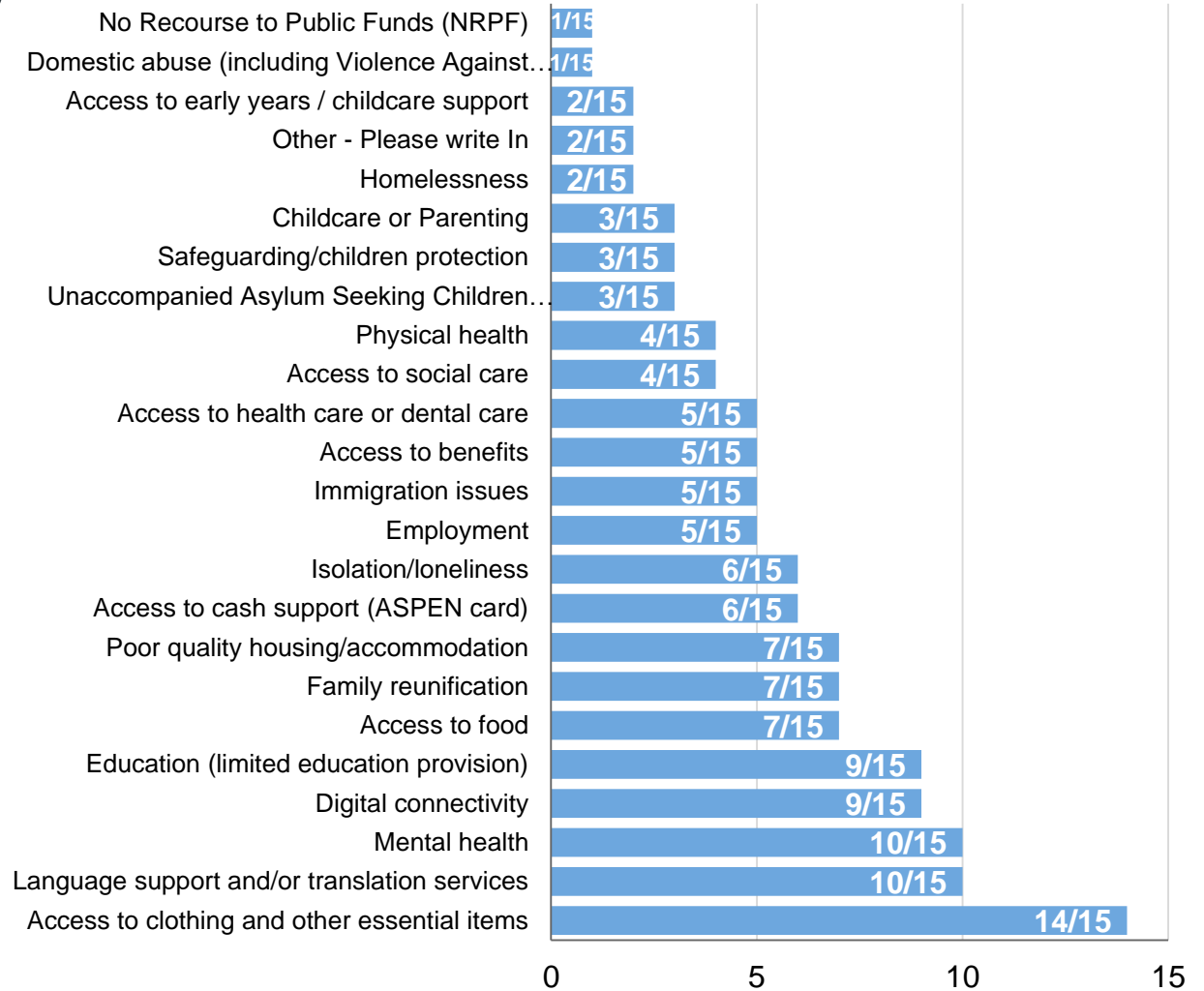
Note: Areas of need chosen by fewer than two organisations have not been shown on the chart

Base: all responding organisations (N=33)

SUPPORT NEED (2)

- Of the organisations that responded to this question just under half (15 out of 33 organisations) support Afghans in bridging hotels.
- Every organisation that supported Afghans in bridging hotels (15 organisations) selected multiple areas of need for Afghan communities over the last two weeks.
- Almost all of the organisations responding to this question (14 out of 15) noted that Afghan families were in need of access to clothing and other essential item. This was followed by language support and/or translation services (10 out of 15 organisations) and mental health support (10 out of 15 organisations)
- Organisations were less likely to report domestic abuse (1 out of 15 organisations) and No Recourse to Public Funds (1 out of 15 organisations) as areas of need over the last two weeks.

What are the areas of need in Afghan communities in the last two weeks? - N =15



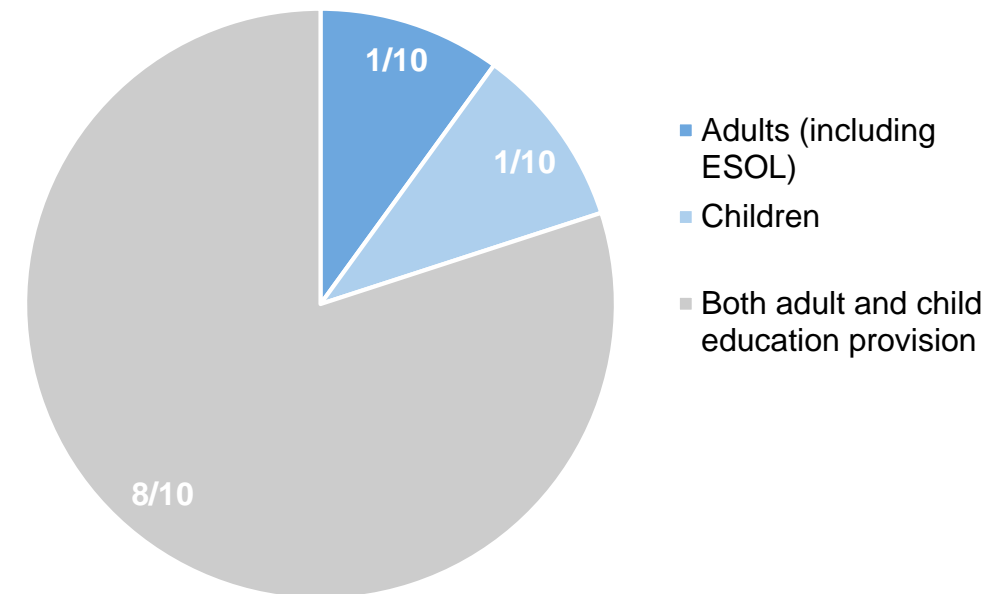
Base: all organisations that support Afghans in bridging hotels (N=15)

EDUCATION PROVISION

- Of the 17 organisations who cited limited education provision as an issue in the last two weeks, 10 organisations detailed who this limited provision was an issue for*.
- Over three quarters of respondents (8 out of 10 organisations) added that education provision was an issue for both adults and children.
- Only 1 out of the 10 organisations responding to this question stated that it was an issue for just children with 1 out of the 10 organisations stating that it was an issue for just adults.

*Seven organisations did not get the opportunity to answer this question as it was added to the survey after they had completed it.

You stated that limited education provision was an issue, was it for children or for adults (including ESOL) or for both? - N=10

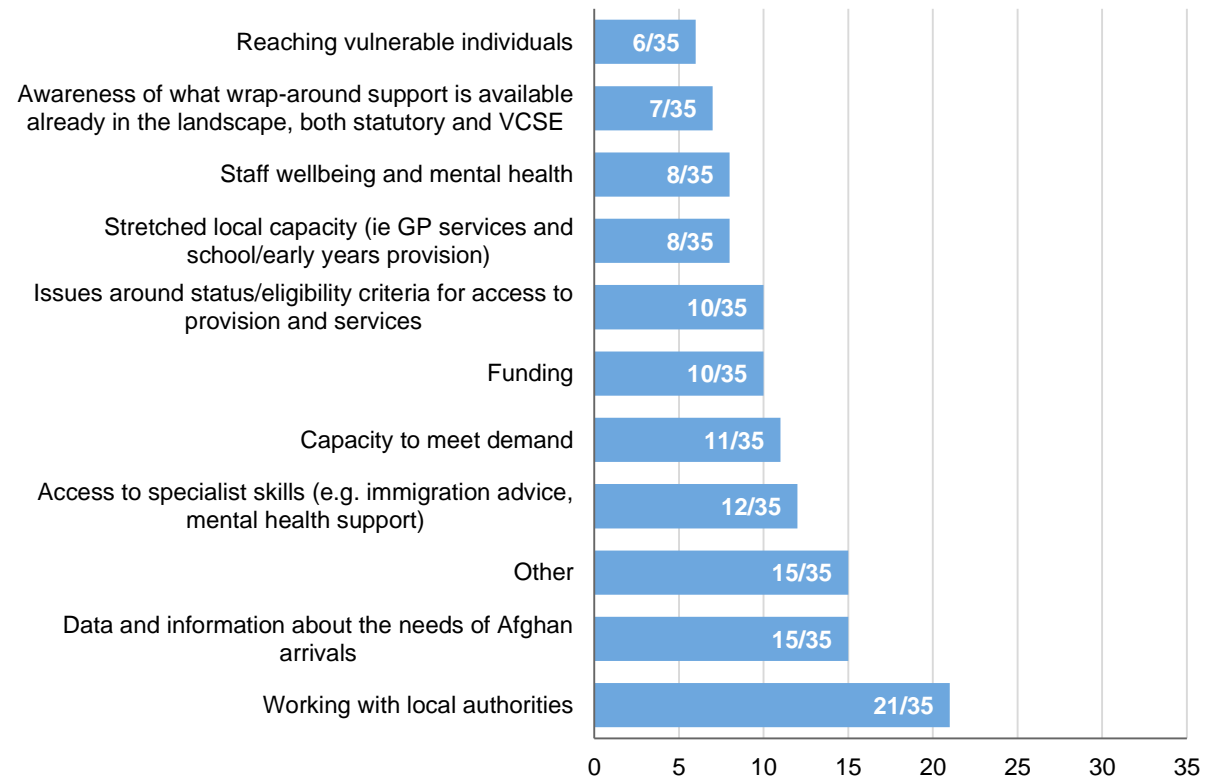


Base: organisations that selected education provision as an issue in the last two weeks (N=10)

CHALLENGES IN THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT (1)

- Again, most organisations surveyed selected multiple challenges being faced by their organisation (26 out of 35 organisations or almost three quarters). On average, organisations highlighted four challenges from the options presented.
- Twenty one out of the thirty five organisations (six in ten organisations) reported that working with local authorities was a challenge.
- Data and information about the needs of Afghan arrivals presented a challenge to four in ten organisations (15 out of 35 organisations), followed by access to specialist skills (12 out of 35 organisations or just over a third).
- Of the organisations responding to this question (35 organisations), 15 support Afghans in bridging hotels. The challenges in the provision of support across these organisations are similar to the trend reported above. However, only 2 out of the 15 organisations selected 'other', reporting specific challenges around funding for school uniforms, access to Oyster Zip cards and lack of central and local coordination.

What are the challenges your organisation is facing in supporting Afghan arrivals? Select all that apply - N=35



Base: all responding organisations (N=35)

CHALLENGES IN THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT (2)

- Around four in ten (15 out of 35 organisations) organisations highlighted other challenges their organisation is facing, in addition to the options initially presented in the specific question about challenges.
- Challenges have been faced when supporting Afghan arrivals to access education, including providing financial support for purchasing school uniforms and materials.
- Securing Oyster Zipcards for children to travel to school was another issue and was a result of school verification letters not being accepted as a form of evidence on the TFL website.
- Organisations said supporting Afghan arrivals to help get at-risk family members still in Afghanistan to the UK was a challenge.
- Some organisations highlighted that limited support was available to support Afghan individuals who had arrived in the UK before recent events.
- Poor coordination within the community sector and between central and local government were also listed as a particular challenge.
- Other challenges mentioned included language barriers, accommodation, immigration and legal support, low referral rates and Covid-19 compliance in hotels.

“Lack of support for Afghan people who arrived before recent events and trying to get at risk family members over to the UK”

“Confusion in the community sector about who does what so we get a lot of duplicate or inappropriate contacts and referrals”

"Most people are not clear on their immigration status, meaning accessing support in line with their rights and entitlements is extremely challenging"

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (1)

- Participants were finally asked to share anything else they thought was relevant, including groups whose **needs were not being met** or **growing issues**. Around half (24 out of 49 organisations) of organisations who completed the survey took the opportunity to make additional comments. The following issues were raised:
- Those living in hotels face particular barriers such as the inability to access or cook **culturally appropriate food**. In response to this, one organisation stated that they offer support by providing a space to cook traditional food in and another by delivering culturally appropriate meals each weekend.
- Respondents stated that **people seeking asylum living in hotels from countries other than Afghanistan** were experiencing similar issues to Afghan communities and would benefit from a similar level of support.

"Asylum seekers who are Afghans and asylum seekers who are not Afghans share many of the same needs... it is not very easy or helpful for us to talk about Afghans separately from other asylum seekers, especially those in hotels."

"Those not on the scheme have exactly the same issues as all our other Asylum seekers. In huge Asylum hotels with patchy co-operation from the managers and no knowledge of local support services or things they can access."

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (2)

- It was also highlighted that those living in hotels had **poor knowledge of local support and services** available to them in their local area and lacked support in accessing entitlements, such as TfL Zip Oyster Cards or enrolling children in school or nursery.
- This was attributed to hotel staff not being adequately trained to sign-post and/or support Afghan communities in accessing services or entitlements. These comments were made by organisations supporting Afghans in bridging hotels.
- Participants also commented on **growing issues**, including **disparities in support available based in the area** in which a refugee is housed. This situation was described as a “**postcode lottery**” whereby one borough may have an abundance of space and support available for families but are not hosting any new arrivals, compared to a neighbouring borough hosting many families.

“If and when they do get a place they cannot buy uniform, and TfL zip oyster card web page won't accept their ID so they have to walk miles to school in ill-fitting shoes or with no coat”

“There is a lack of clarity about length of expected time in bridging hotels and very poor quality support whilst they are there”

“There need to be staff in the hotels whose sole job it is to make contact and sign-post, including showing the route and supporting school applications”

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (3)

- Organisations also noted limited **access to information on Afghan arrivals from the Council and/or Home Office** causing challenges to providing adequate and appropriate support.
- **Resettling families from hotels to homes** in the local area was also noted as a major issue due to lack of affordable housing and challenges around engaging private landlords.
- Organisations also noted that **connecting younger people who arrived in the UK prior to the crisis with extended families** entering the UK was a challenge. It was stated that extended families entering the UK were being placed in areas outside of London where they have no existing family or support networks.
- **Access to identification from the Home Office** was also outlined as a growing issue, which was inhibiting people's ability to access entitlements and participate in society, such as by setting up a bank account or starting work.
- **Access to education for young people (14-18)** was also deemed a growing issue as younger people were being refused English or IT classes due to 'eligibility'.

"Local children's centres are offering bespoke under 5s sessions but the difficulty is letting the families know"

"Trusted frontline organisations play an important role to support families. The number of families being [resettled] is restricted at present. The information should be at least available to local infrastructure organisations"

"We are happy to support more Afghan families. However, we do not know how many families have been resettled...and therefore we cannot contact people to invite them to conversation clubs."

"We are asking the Government why they are not making a public plea for private landlords to come forth"

NEXT STEPS

- The next wave of the [Afghan Community Response Survey](#) will be issued to organisations on 17th November and will close on 1st December.
- This report and future findings will be made available on a dedicated [Datastore](#) page.
- There will be some changes to the next iteration of the survey based on participant feedback. Some questions will be amended to improve clarity on the categories and profiles of Afghans being supported and their specific needs. Additional questions will help us to better understand the types of organisations responding and details of the challenges they are facing in supporting Afghan arrivals.

RESOURCES FOR RESPONDENTS

- How voluntary, community and faith groups can welcome refugees to their neighbourhood through the [Community Sponsorship Scheme](#).
- Register your offer to [help refugees](#) coming to the UK.
- Find a volunteer or be a volunteer- [Team London](#).
- Find out what other support is available for Afghans in your area and/or list your offer/request on [London Plus](#).
- [Voluntary and Community Sector Emergency Partnership \(VCSEP\)](#)
- Offer an affordable property to a refugee family via a [Community Sponsorship Group](#) or the [Government's Housing Portal](#).
- For a temporary period [TFL](#) will be accepting Border Force ID cards as an alternative form of evidence for Zip Oyster Card application for Afghan arrivals.
- Afghanistan resettlement and entitlements: [policy statement](#)
- [Guidance](#) on the eligibility of Afghan nationals, including people on the standard asylum route, to the Adult Education Budget, including ESOL.
- Join the GLA's ESOL newsletter for information on AEB and other course vacancies, funding and resources: esolcoordinators@london.gov.uk
- [Find \(AEB\) adult education providers near me](#)



CONTACT DETAILS

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